

# Frequently Asked Questions about the BCA Vendor Screening Program



## **What is the BCA Vendor Screening Program?**

The BCA Vendor Screening Program is a BCA service which provides a path for vendors and vendor employees to comply with the FBI's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Security Policy. This policy requires persons with access to private and confidential criminal justice information to submit to a fingerprint-based background check prior to being granted unescorted access to physically secure locations where criminal justice information is processed. If the vendor provides information technology, the policy also requires that the technical infrastructure meet certain requirements.

## **What is the benefit to the vendor?**

By using the BCA Vendor Screening Program, the vendor is able to provide services throughout the State of Minnesota at any agency where criminal justice information is processed.

## **Can a sheriff's office or police department confirm the clearance of a vendor company or vendor employees?**

Yes. Agencies can look up BCA-screened vendors and vendor-employees and check certification expiration dates in CJIS Online on the [Launch Pad](#).

## **What is the process for the vendor vetting / background checks?**

Vendors should contact the BCA Vendor Screening Unit at [BCACJISSATScreening@state.mn.us](mailto:BCACJISSATScreening@state.mn.us) to begin the process. BCA staff will explain the program and send the vendor two forms: one form collects vendor company information and the other is a contract between the provider and the BCA which covers the requirements, fees, and a security addendum required by the FBI policy.

## **Should the vendor obtain vendor screening forms from the sheriff or police department where they will provide services?**

To ensure the vendor receives the most updated forms, forms should only be obtained directly from the BCA.

## **Does the State require anything besides a contract?**

Yes. To process the contract, each company will need a SWIFT Vendor Identification number. More information is available at the Minnesota Management and Budget [Supplier Portal](#).

**Must vendors have an agreement with the State to enroll in the process?**

Yes. The contract is the agreement with the State of Minnesota.

**What is the cost?**

Current fees associated with background checks are available [on the BCA Website](#).

**What criminal justice information is checked?**

The screening process includes federal and state criminal databases, driver's license, wanted persons, warrants, predatory offender registration, and additional states of residence.

**How long does the screening process take?**

Typically the process can be completed in less than six weeks. It may be shorter depending on current volume, how long it takes vendors to complete and submit forms/contracts, and whether the vendor employee would have logical (ex. IT developer) versus physical (ex. janitorial service) exposure to criminal justice information.

Depending on local agency policies, it may be possible for the agency to escort the vendor while awaiting background clearance.

**How are the company and the employee notified of the clearance status?**

Vendor companies are notified by email when they are cleared to submit employee background check packets. After those checks take place, vendor companies are notified of which employees have been approved or denied. Employees are also notified individually.

**Besides the background check, must the employee meet any additional requirements?**

To comply with FBI requirements, employees must successfully complete Security Awareness Training and a certification test.

**For a denied employee, is there an option for appeal?**

If an employee receives a denial, full information about the appeal process is provided to the employee and employer. Denied employees can request to see the results of their background check by making a data practices request to the BCA. The employing vendor can choose to appeal the denial to the CJIS Security Officer by explaining why the employee's criminal history should not prevent the employee's access to criminal justice information.

**How long does BCA certification last?**

Vendor employees must complete Security Awareness Training every two years. The vendor contract with the BCA lasts for five years.

**Is the BCA Vendor Screening Program my only option to meet FBI CJIS Security Policy requirements?**

Criminal justice agencies can conduct their own background investigations following the directive of the FBI's CJIS Security Policy. If the vendor is providing information technology infrastructure, the criminal justice agency would also need to evaluate that infrastructure under the terms of the FBI CJIS Security Policy. That background investigation will only be compliant for that agency.